

PURPOSE

All About Care Australia (AACCA) recognises the importance of upholding the participant's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice. Both participants and potential participants have the right to select and involve an advocate, or a representative of their choice, to participate or act on their behalf at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all AACCA participants, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

DEFINITION

Advocacy is the active support for a cause or position, and, in this context, it is an expression of support for a person who may find it difficult to speak for him or herself. It may include matters such as achieving social justice, improving a person's well-being, preventing of abusive and discriminatory treatment or stopping unjust and unfair treatment so it is possible that a person's fundamental needs, human rights and interests are met.

Below is a list of six types of advocacy:

1. **Individual advocacy** - A one-on-one approach aiming to prevent or address instances of discrimination or abuse.
2. **Systemic advocacy** - Working to influence or secure long-term changes to ensure the collective rights and interests of people with disabilities.
3. **Family advocacy** - A parent or family member advocates with, and on behalf of, a family member with a disability.
4. **Citizen advocacy** - Matches people with disabilities to volunteers.
5. **Legal advocacy** - Upholds the rights and interests of individuals with disabilities by addressing the legal aspects of discrimination, abuse and neglect.
6. **Self-advocacy** - Supports people with disabilities to advocate for themselves or as a group.

POLICY

All participants have the right to use an advocate of their choice to represent their interests and speak on their behalf regarding any aspect of the supports or services they receive.

Staff will work cooperatively with the participant's nominated advocate and will show the same respect to the advocate as is shown to the participant. When a participant cannot advocate for themselves, it is AACCA's policy to ensure that the participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES

- AACCA will ensure that all relevant staff receive training in using advocates.
- AACCA will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- AACCA will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.
- AACCA will work cooperatively with any nominated advocate chosen by the participant and show the same respect to the advocate, as is shown to the participant.

- AACCA will develop expertise in identifying when a participant needs advocacy, especially in relation to a threat to their basic human rights.
- AACCA will support any mechanism that will promote meaningful advocacy for vulnerable non-represented participants. (For example, through AACCA's safeguarding panel)

PROCEDURE

INITIAL ASSESSMENT (PARTICIPANT WITHOUT AN ADVOCATE)

- Discuss the participant's right to appoint an advocate at any time and to have an advocate present to speak on their behalf.
- Provide the participant with advocacy information.
- Explain to the participant their rights regarding advocacy as per the AACCA Service Agreement and Charter of Rights and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018.
- Advise the participant that if they wish to utilise advocacy services, AACCA can assist them by providing them with a list of contacts for advocacy support.
- Provide the Authority to Engage an Advocate Form to the participant if they decide to utilise the services of an advocate. The completed and signed form is stored in the participant's file.
- Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the advocate (such as email, phone, or any other method).
- Inform the participant that they can withdraw approval for an advocate to act on their behalf at any time.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT (PARTICIPANT WITH ADVOCATE/REPRESENTATIVE)

Before initial assessment

- Ensure during initial contact with the participant that they are informed of their right to an advocate and record the advocate's details if they have one.
- Advise the participant of the need to complete the Authority to Engage an Advocate Form and provide the appropriate form to the participant.
- Contact the nominated advocate to ensure they are aware they are nominated and confirm they agree to be an advocate.
- Place the completed Authority to Engage an Advocate Form in the participant's file.
- Ensure the potential participant is aware of their advocacy rights, including the right to have an advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between themselves and AACCA.
- Schedule the participant's initial assessment at a time and date that will allow the advocate to be present.
- Ensure that an identified advocate is present at the assessment.

At initial assessment

- Request the completion of the Authority to Engage an Advocate Form, if it has not already been completed, for AACCA to formally recognise the nominated person as the participant's advocate.
- Gather information about the advocate, such as contact details and methodology.
- Explain to the participant that they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Changes should be documented in writing by the participant using the Authority to Engage an Advocate Form.

WORKING WITH ADVOCATES

- Identify the existence and details of an advocate on the participant's file.
- Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the advocate. This includes people who are not authorised to act as an advocate.
- Communicate with a participant's advocate and involve them in the process of goal setting, planning service responses, and referrals for additional or alternative services.
- Provide the advocate with ongoing information regarding the health and well-being of the participant, as agreed.
- Ensure that all on-call staff are aware of the participant's advocate and any restrictions regarding the contact of non-authorised contacts.

CONTINUING WORK WITH ADVOCATES

- Provide participants with written and verbal information that reminds them of their right to have (or change) an advocate during reassessments, visits or meetings.
- Remind participants of their right to have (or change) an advocate at any time, including each annual review of services or via written communication.
- Communicate and work cooperatively with advocates.
- Refer participants assessed as 'unable to manage their service' (and with no other advocate) to the Queensland Government Office of the Public Advocate, as appropriate.

Note: A web link accessing disability advocacy services is available. As a postcode, town or suburb must be entered to access services, AACCA will guide and assist participants. To access go to [askizzy-disability-advocacy-finder](#)

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Authority to Engage an Advocate Form

REFERENCES

Disability Services Act 2006 (QLD)

Disability Inclusion Act and Regulation 2014

Disability (NDIS Transition) Amendment Act 2019

National Disability Insurance Agency

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018

Privacy Act (1988)

QLD Human Rights Act 2019

ADVOCACY INFORMATION

Organisations	Websites
Australian Centre for Disability Law	disabilitylaw.org.au
Autism Asperger's Advocacy Australia (A4)	a4.org.au
The Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand	asan-au.org
Blind Citizens Australia	bca.org.au
Brain Injury Australia	braininjuryaustralia.org.au
Children and Young People with Disability Australia	cyda.org.au
Deaf Australia	deafaustalia.org.au
Deafness Forum of Australia	deafnessforum.org.au
Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)	da.org.au
First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)	fpdn.org.au
Human Rights Council of Australia	hrca.org.au
Inclusion Australia (National Council on Intellectual Disability - NCID)	inclusionaustralia.org.au
Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)	ids.org.au
Mental Health Australia	mhaustalia.org
National Disability Services	nds.org.au
National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)	neda.org.au
People With Disability Australia	pwd.org.au
Physical Disability Australia (PDA)	pda.org.au
Short Statured People of Australia	sspa.org.au
Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)	wwda.org.au

ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS IN QUEENSLAND

Advocacy Providers	Website
Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia	adaaaustralia.com.au
AMPARO Advocacy Inc	amparo.org.au
Capricorn Citizen Advocacy: Rockhampton	capca.org.au
Charters Towers: Advocacy	charterstowers.qld.gov.au
Independent Advocacy Townsville	independentadvocacy.org.au
Ipswich Regional Advocacy Service Inc	irasi.com.au
Mackay Advocacy	mackayadvocacy.com.au
Queensland Advocacy Incorporated	gai.org.au
Rights in Action Inc	rightsinaction.org
Speaking Up For You Inc: Brisbane	sufy.org.au
Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy	citizenadvocacy.com
The Advocacy and Support Centre	tascnational.org.au